Justice
May 28, 2008

Minister to Present to Senate Committee

The Honourable Jerome Kennedy, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, will present to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs today (Wednesday, May 28) on the topic of Bill C-31, *An Act to Amend the Judges Act*. During his presentation, Minister Kennedy will discuss the need for more judges and judicial resources in Newfoundland and Labrador, the judicial appointment process and the upcoming vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada.

"I am pleased to be invited by the Senate committee to address Bill C-31 and raise key issues for Newfoundland and Labrador such as the imminent vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada and judicial resources," said Minister Kennedy. "Bill C-31 will see 20 new Superior Court judges in Canada with Newfoundland and Labrador allocated one and it is critical that I outline the need for this position, along with increased resources and associated funding."

The approaching retirement of Mr. Justice Michel Bastarache from the Supreme Court of Canada leaves an opening for an Atlantic Canada appointment and Minister Kennedy views his appearance before the Senate committee as an opportune time to discuss this matter.

"Since 1949 our province has not been represented on the Supreme Court of Canada and constitutional convention indicates the next appointment should be from Atlantic Canada," said Minister Kennedy. "I will outline to the committee that this convention should be followed and our province should receive the next appointment. We have many judges who would make exemplary members of the Supreme Court of Canada and now is the time to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is represented on this court."

Minister Kennedy will also outline his position that the judicial appointment process must be consistent across Canada and include consultation between the Federal Government and the provinces. The appointment of judges is an issue that affects all Canadians and the appointment process must include input from provinces where new or replacement judicial resources will be appointed.

Minister Kennedy's presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs will take place in Room 2, Victoria Building at 6:30 p.m. Newfoundland Standard Time.

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Media contact:
Ken Morrissey
Director of Communications
Department of Justice
709-729-6985, 685-6612
kenmorrissey@gov.nl.ca

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